DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 594 UD 027 740

AUTHOR Kuykendall, Crystal
TITLE Improving Black Student Achievement by Enhancing Students' Self-Image.
INSTITUTION American Univ., Washington, DC. Mid-Atlantic Equity Center.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 81p.; For related documents, see UD 027 739-740.
PUB TYPE Guides - General (050)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Culture; Black Education; *Black Students; *Classroom Techniques; *Cultural Awareness; Elementary Secondary Education; Racial Bias; *Self Concept; *Self Esteem; *Teacher Role; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Institutional Racism

ABSTRACT

This guide to improving Black student achievement by enhancing self-image is the third part of a four-part series addressing the essential characteristics of effective instruction that have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Black and Hispanic students. A positive academic identity is crucial for underachieving Black students. Teachers play a major role in building students' belief in and respect for themselves by providing an atmosphere in which students can experience success. Poor attitudes about learning and negative classroom behaviors are often shaped by what a student perceives as the teacher's attitudes, behaviors, and expectations. The following school-related factors comprise institutional racism that reinforces negative self-image: (1) curricula, instructional strategies, and teaching styles that are incompatible with cultural preferences; (2) absence of materials that include Black content and role models; (3) stereotyping that results in low or negative teacher expectations; (4) tracking that results in failure to foster higher order thinking skills; and (5) test bias. Strategies are suggested in the following areas: (1) mitigating the effects of institutional racism; (2) using teaching styles that are sensitive to Black culture; (3) using flexible and cooperative grouping; (4) demonstrating high expectations; (5) teaching higher order thinking skills; and (6) overcoming fear of failure and rejection of success. Ten charts, an illustration of the thinking process and the writing process, and three worksheets to identify and improve low self-image are included. A 93-item bibliography is appended. (FMW)

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Improving Black Student Achievement By Enhancing Students' Self-Image

by

CRYSTAL KUYKENDALL, Ed.D, J.D.

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center
School of Education
The American University

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5010 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20016

Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn

Cross-Cultural Communication:
An Essential Dimension of
Effective Education

Improving Black Student Achievement
By Enhancing Students' Self-Image

Learning Styles:
The Joy of Diversity

MID-ATLANTIC EQUITY CENTER SERIES

Dedicated to the memories
of my late mother and my late husband—
who planted and nurtured the seeds of self-love
—my children who continue to replenish me . . .
and teachers everywhere who must persist in their efforts
to inspire and teach children of the universe.

Foreword

The academic underachievement of Black and Hispanic students is documented by the large gap between standardized test scores of minority and majority students and by the continued high rate of suspension and dropout among Black and Hispanic teenagers. This underachievement of a large and growing segment of our population is nothing short of a national crisis.

By the year 2020, Blacks and Hispanics will comprise approximately 30 percent of our population. Labor force projections indicate a severe decline in the number of blue-collar jobs and a substantial increase in jobs that require high levels of technical skill. Given this economic picture, the crisis of underachieving minority students will become a central issue in determining our nation's economic survival. We can envision a large unemployed segment of the population and, simultaneously, a severe labor shortage in numerous highly skilled occupations. It is doubtful the United States can maintain world leadership under these conditions. As Americans and in our roles as educators, we must work together to ensure that equitable opportunities exist for all students. Minority children, like all children, should be given the opportunity to succeed.

Many factors have been cited for the underachievement of Black and Hispanic students, including economics, parents, community and the environment. The Effective Schools Research makes it clear that whatever influence is exerted by these factors, schools can make a difference. Researchers who study effective schools have found schools serving lower-income Black and Hispanic neighborhoods where students' performance on standardized tests is average or above. While we may not be able to control other variables, evidence indicates that schools can have a significant impact on minority students' academic performance.

With this in mind, researchers have analyzed characteristics of effective school districts, school buildings, classrooms and teachers. They have also outlined effective instructional strategies. The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center has designed this publication series to address four essential characteristics of effective instruction identified by these researchers, including:

(1) teaching students to persist in their learning in *Learning to Persist / Persisting to Learn*;
(2) understanding cultural diversity and its importance in the classroom in *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education*;
(3) helping Black students to build positive academic self-concept in

Improving Black Student Achievement By Enhancing Students' Self-Image; and

(4) incorporating learning-style differences into curriculum and instruction in *Learning Styles: The Joy of Diversity*.

Both *Learning to Persist / Persisting to Learn* and *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education* were first published by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Race Equity but are now available from the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center.

Learning to Persist / Persisting to Learn, the first in the series, will assist teachers to improve the academic self-concept of minority students by helping teachers: (1) to understand why some students fail to successfully complete a task; (2) to identify non-persisting students; and (3) to pinpoint curriculum and instructional strategies that can help students to learn to persist. Persistence is a learned behavior, and students from lower-income families are more likely than their middle-income counterparts to observe adults who lack control of their environment and to view luck or chance as a more significant factor in success than effort or persistence. *Learning to Persist / Persisting to Learn* helps teachers teach students to cope with adversity and to persist in the successful completion of a task.

Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education discusses cultural differences that can lead to communication problems in the classroom and suggests behaviors that affirm rather than devalue a minority student's culture. Since our educational institutions tend to reflect the norms and values of the majority culture, cultural misunderstandings often have a negative effect on a minority student's academic performance. *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education* assists teachers to recognize and utilize student diversity in ways that enhance academic identity.

Improving Black Student Achievement By Enhancing Students' Self-Image helps teachers to better understand the factors that contribute to a positive self-image for Black students and to design and implement instructional strategies that will enhance Black students' academic self-concept. While a positive academic identity is important for all students, it is a particularly critical issue for underachieving Black students.

Learning Styles: The Joy of Diversity stresses the importance of recognizing differences in learning styles and proposes curricular and instructional strategies for underachieving females and minority students that take those differences into account.

We hope that you will find this pamphlet series helpful in your efforts to increase the academic achievement of Black and Hispanic students. We look forward to your comments on our publications.

Sheryl Denbo, Ph.d., Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Equity Center

Acknowledgments

This publication represents the collaborative efforts of numerous individuals. I wish to thank the following people who contributed to this work: Francena Cummings, Carolyn Douglas, Jill Moss Greenberg, Margaret LaRocca, Susan Shaffer, Warren Simmons, Constance Tate, Jacqueline Zakrewsky, and Carolyn Kingsley. This project could not have been completed without their help and supportive spirit.

Sheryl Denbo, Ph.d., Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Equity Center

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How to Get the Most from this Publication

All educators should strive to bring out the best in all students. This requires that they be prepared to give their best. This publication can facilitate your personal and professional growth and help you bring out the best in countless children and youth.

The following tips will help you to get the most from the information provided:

- Read the entire booklet with an open mind.
- Make note of insights from chapter 1 that pertain to your personal experiences.
- Make a list of those debilitating school-related factors or personal behavior discussed in chapter 2 that you will work to change.
- After reading chapter 3, make a list of strategies you will implement this year. Be sure to set a date for actual implementation of each activity.
- Use the worksheets in chapter 4 to set goals for personal behavior modification and long-term student growth.

Finally, after you have done all of the above, read this publication again in a few months. It will mean more to you after you have put it to practical use. Good luck!

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Introduction

Being an educator is special. Many teachers are routinely provided with unique joys—such as the joy of knowing they have touched a child's life—or the joy of seeing a child's face sparkle when learning has occurred. Yet as gratifying as teaching can be, it also carries a tremendous social responsibility. For too many educators, teaching is often frustrating and stressful rather than rewarding. Part of this stems from the anxiety many teachers feel over their perceived inability to change the plight of today's youth—Black youth, in particular. The educational treatment and degree of success of minority students will become an even more critical issue for educators because, by the year 2000, almost 42 percent of all public school students will be "minority" children or children in poverty (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986).

According to reports on *The State of Black America* (National Urban League, 1983, 1986 and 1989), Black youth are being buffeted by a series of forces that, if allowed to go unchecked, could create a "lost generation." The following statistics indicate the magnitude of the forces affecting Black youth:

- The proportion of 18- to 24-year-old Blacks and Hispanics completing high school increased significantly between 1976 and 1986; yet, as of 1986, the proportion enrolling in college declined (American Council on Education, 1988).
- The percentage of Black high school graduates 18 to 24 years old enrolled in college was lower in 1986 than in 1975 (American Council on Education/Education Commission of the States, 1988).
- During the last decade, the proportion of Black men attending college suffered the largest decline of all racial and gender groups (American Council on Education/Education Commission of the States, 1988).
- The leading cause of death among 18- to 24-year-old Black males is murder by other Blacks (National Urban League, 1983).
- The national dropout rate for all students averages 17.4 percent, but as many as 49.6 percent of Black youth dropped out of school in 1985 (Time Magazine, 1986).
- In 1987, 45.1 percent of all Black children were living in poverty, with 66.2 percent of all Black children in female-headed households being poor. For households headed by a young Black mother under

25 years of age, the poverty rate is 90 percent (National Urban League, *The State of Black America*, 1989).

- The largest increases in poverty are among Blacks without a college education (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1988).

Despite such depressing revelations, teachers and other caring adults can be inspired by studies that show schools can positively impact the achievement of Black youth (Edmonds, 1979). Although a teacher can discourage growth, an effective teacher can overcome negative prior conditioning (Mitchell and Conn, 1985). The average child spends an estimated 15,000 hours in school—six hours per day, usually. This means that children in kindergarten through twelfth grade spend more time Monday through Friday interacting with their teachers than with their parents. By developing an understanding of the link between achievement and self-image, many teachers will be able to make the best use of the time they have with students. Schools can and must become showcases of excellence for children of all races, facilitating the creation of a better society.

In addition, all teachers can experience the sheer joy this profession can and should provide. The question is "how?" How do concerned teachers and committed educators reach Black youth? How do educators put joy and gratification back into the profession? How do educators improve the achievement of Black youth and foster in them those values and ideals most critical for future success?

Black students who are high academic achievers in a predominantly White school often feel isolated by low or stereotypic teacher expectations and by academic placement with few other Black students. They may also be ridiculed by their peers for their achievements.

Motivation strongly influences how much we learn. A person who wants to do well is more likely to perform better than someone of similar intelligence but lower aspirations. The child who is motivated as a result of improved self-image will derive more from the learning process (Comer, 1980). Children, like adults, must have a sense of purpose to achieve their best. Teachers need only consider their own learning experiences to realize the correlation between self-image and achievement. Regardless of race, gender or grade level, children who feel good about themselves perform better and learn more (Mitchell and Conn, 1985).

This publication can help teachers to:

- understand the importance and development of self-image and how it relates to the achievement of all students—and to the achievement of Black students in particular;
- understand institutional, organizational or individual behavior that contributes to low academic self-image among Black students; and

- develop and utilize strategies to overcome poor student self-image and, by so doing, improve student achievement.

Understanding the problems and strategies associated with improving the self-image of Black youth can help teachers improve the self-image of all youth. Students who are able to facilitate their own positive development can in turn foster the positive development of others and make lasting contributions to society.

Chapter 1

Self-Image: Its Definition, Development and Detection

To improve students' self-image, teachers will find it helpful to understand how:

- self-image is defined;
- self-image is developed;
- teachers' roles affect self-image; and
- self-image in Black youth, whether positive or negative, is reflected in attitude and behavior.

Self-Image: Its Definition and Importance

Self-image is an individual's self-concept. It is both a belief in self and a respect for self. In children, self-image is formed largely by how they think significant adults in their lives perceive them.

Individuals need a high self-image to cope effectively with the demands of life. Embedded in each child's self-image is our hope for the future. Unless children feel secure and happy in the present, they are unable to think positively about the future (Gilmore, 1982). Studies of students in Head Start show efforts to improve self-image led to improved achievement (Lazar and Darlington, 1978).

Praise and acceptance strengthen self-image, while criticism and disapproval lower it. Although older children and teenagers base their self-image primarily on the perceptions of their peers, they often do so because peer groups substitute for a perceived lack of adult affection. Students who feel good about themselves and who score high on self-esteem are also the highest achievers (Gilmore, 1982). Thus, the development of a child's self-image is perhaps the most important barometer of future success.

Self-Image: Development and Long-term Impact

Schools play a major role in building or lowering students' self-image. Eighty percent of Black children entering school have a posi-

tive self-image; twenty percent still do by the fifth grade, yet only five percent do by their senior year in high school (Silberman, 1971). In 1985, Bell studied the progressively decreasing scores of Black students on Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills in the District of Columbia public schools. Bell found that as Black children mature, they begin to experience many hostilities imposed by the majority culture. By early adolescence, many Black students believe that academic achievement will not improve their status or benefits. These students learn to adapt to this perceived definition of reality by giving less time and energy to school work. These findings are relevant to research that shows that the longer Black youth stay in school, the farther behind they fall academically (Berube, 1984).

Accomplishment is a key ingredient in improving self-image. A learning environment that offers encouragement, praise and opportunities for accomplishment will promote the development of a positive self-image (Mitchell, 1985). Children who lack opportunities to experience in-school success are likely to feel frustrated. Schools lacking success-inspiring atmospheres can provide non-inspiring, often alienating experiences for students. Often, students who are denied in-school success will seek "accomplishment" outside of school—through illegal or unacceptable behavior.

Teachers' Roles in Shaping Self-Image

As the adults who spend the most concentrated time with children during the day, teachers shape students' self-image either deliberately or inadvertently. Charles Silberman noted: "It is the failure to develop self-respect, not the failure to teach subject matter, that is the *real* problem in education." Moreover, Silberman (1971) emphasized that lower-income children need to:

> . . . see themselves as people of worth, capable of dealing with their environments. This will provide a base on which other objects can be built. Therefore, teachers must respond to children in ways that convey a sense of trust and affection. *They must also give children a sense of competence by structuring classroom activities which give every child frequent experiences of success.* [Emphasis added.]

Haim Ginott, a teacher and child psychologist, made this supporting observation:

> I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood

> that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized. (Mitchell, 1985).

For many Black youth, factors such as negative stereotypes, low teacher expectations and cultural bias in schools offer a defeating, discouraging experience. Teachers who have negative attitudes toward their students contribute to the massive educational failure of Black children (Levy, 1983). When teachers focus on strengths and make children feel confident, a positive self-image can develop (Martin, 1980). Teachers can foster the development of high academic self-images when they identify and develop some of the unique cultural and social strengths Black children bring to the classroom. Renowned Black psychologist Alvin Poussaint found that Black children have strong needs for achievement and approval. When these needs are not met, students' self-concepts suffer (1972).

Self-confidence can be fostered through the development and recognition of students' strengths even when those strengths are non-academic. When a child is praised and given the opportunity to display non-academic strengths, total self-image is improved and academic weaknesses are more likely to be overcome. Teachers can then move from recognizing non-academic skills to creating situations where these talents have an academic application.

In a comparative study of self-perceptions among Black girls and boys, Hare (1979) found that the self-image of Black boys depended on non-academic factors such as social ability and peer acceptance. The self-image of Black girls, in comparison, was related more strongly to academic achievement. This study supports evidence that shows young Black males can simultaneously display a positive social self-image in their own communities or families and a negative academic self-image in educational environments.

Table I (on the following page) provides a partial listing of characteristics of low academic self-image and high social self-image that many Black youth, especially boys, are likely to display in tandem.

Table I

Low Academic Self-Image and High Social Self-Image

Characteristics of Low Academic Self-Image	Characteristics of High Social Self-Image
Failure to complete work	Confidence in performing before others
Hostility/disruptive behavior or defiant speech in class	Unique ability in social skills, such as sports, dancing, "playing the dozens" or rapping
Frequent use of excuses	Mutual support system with peers
Daydreaming, poor attention span	Keen interest and preoccupation with social activities, such as listening to music, dancing, playing sports or doing artwork
Little or no eye contact	Nonverbal communication and eye contact
Fear of failure and of trying	Persistence in the learning and performance of social skills (e.g., bike riding, card playing, music or sports)
Dislike for school, the teacher or both	Desire to be liked in social functions/notice of others
No volunteering or participating; repeated and deliberate tardiness and absences.	Extensive desire for interaction with those most encouraging and supportive
Tendency to be withdrawn and isolated	Friendly, sincere behavior
Facial expressions and body movement tend to show visible pain, frustration and anxiety	Facial expressions and body movements reflect enjoyment

(From Kuykendall, Crystal. A study of the responses of over 2,000 teachers surveyed 1984-1987 in Washington, D.C.)

Self-Image: How It Is Reflected in Behavior and Attitudes

Teachers are frequently dismayed over what they perceive as negative attitudes in lower-achieving youth. In turn, poor attitudes about learning and the resulting negative classroom behavior are often shaped by what a child perceives as the teacher's attitude, behavior and expectations. The cycle is then completed by the child's academic self-image being reflected in classroom behavior.

Black youth may be taught at home to appreciate certain skills that are not always valued in classrooms and do not reflect the school's norms. These include nonverbal communication, dance and rhythmic movements, learning through cooperation and verbal interplay during instruction. They also may acquire social "survival" strategies similar to the behavior of others in their communities and culture (e.g., the "hip" walking styles, expressive movements or the use of "Black English"). This duality between the culture of the school and the culture of the family and community can account for much of the discrepancy between academic and social self-concept.

Many Black youth develop negative attitudes and behavior patterns regarding education when schools fail to affirm the values and norms of their culture. In fact, when Black youth sense disapproval of their style of academic assertiveness, their energy might be channeled into aggressiveness against the academic environment (Howard, 1987). What is perceived as passive cooperation in the elementary school years might become hostility in junior and senior high school—and, in extreme cases, lead to drug abuse and criminal behavior (Lawrence, 1985).

The attitudes, behavior and self-image of many Black youth improve when students feel accepted; "rapport" is established; one-on-one guidance is provided; group learning takes place; body movement and nonverbal communication are accepted; and students are encouraged to be their best. Black youth, like other youth, relate positively to people who appreciate their strengths and uniqueness, praise and respect their efforts and accept and work with their shortcomings. When peers provide this support, they become an individual's primary support unit. Teachers can also satisfy the need youths have for approval and can turn the peer group into one that supports academic achievement.

The indicators or characteristics of low academic self-image presented in Table I have been observed by many teachers and school officials. The following list discusses why these characteristics may exist:

- *Children who fail to complete work . . .* might have a high fear of failure ("I won't get a passing grade anyway"), a high fear of success or no success motivation. Consequently, they avoid academic work

and the negative consequences associated with it (e.g., teacher and/or peer disapproval).

- *Children who are hostile, disruptive, delinquent and/or defiant in speech in class* . . . might have a fear of other people. Their hostility is motivated in part by what they see as the need to "do unto others before they get a chance to do unto you." These children have been mistreated and emotionally abused. They may be hostile as a means of protecting themselves from additional hurt. All too often, their hurt is exacerbated in classrooms that do not reward them for their strengths or by teachers who have negative expectations.

- *Children who frequently use excuses to justify poor performance* . . . might be afraid of what teachers think of them. These children often need a crutch to justify what they fear most—failure. They have been made to feel inferior but are still fighting against what they perceive as the teacher's negative impressions. In making excuses, they are trying to maintain some semblance of dignity.

- *Children who daydream or show a poor attention span* . . . might be bored or not motivated to succeed. Some students think they are going to fail—even if they do pay attention; some students are not inspired (by teachers, peers or parents) to succeed. Others are simply not challenged by the material. Still others do not see a connection between the material and their day-to-day realities.

- *Children who utilize little or no eye contact* . . . might feel that direct eye contact is a sign of disrespect—particularly if the speaker is an adult or a member of the majority racial or cultural group. Some Black children may not look adults in the eye because they see dislike in the other person's eyes. Direct eye contact can make feelings and attitudes more obvious. Many Black youth who are especially proficient in nonverbal communication will detect bias in their teacher's eyes—making eye contact with that teacher even more painful.

- *Children who are afraid to try and who give up too easily* . . . generally have a fear of failure. They have already determined that the best way to prevent the pain of not doing well is not to try. Usually, confidence has not been built in an area where the student has shown strength. The result is often a lack of self-confidence and an unwillingness to try. This fear will eventually disappear in children who feel inspired and motivated and who know others believe in them. By the same token, children who don't persist lack the confidence to keep going because they really don't feel they will meet with success. Dr. Bessie C. Howard, in *Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn* (another publication in the Mid-Atlantic Equity

Center series on effective instruction), has outlined specific teaching strategies that can help foster persistence in students.

- *Children who dislike school, the teacher or both* . . . might eventually develop such painful hostility or fear that they withdraw from school. In a 1982 study of minority high school dropouts, students described their teachers as "unhappy with their jobs, disgruntled, bored, boring, unfair and sometimes humiliating" (Olsen, Gary and Moore, 1982). A similar study of urban youth in 1984 concluded that teachers are the biggest school-related factor for dropouts—often eroding student confidence and causing at-risk youth to go to great lengths to avoid teachers who put them in uncomfortable and humiliating positions (Fine, 1986).

- *Children who don't volunteer or participate* . . . might fear failure or success. If they haven't been *motivated* to succeed, volunteering and participating are unattractive. If they fear ridicule for wrong answers or actions, volunteering is practically impossible. In addition, many Black youth don't volunteer if they feel a teacher doesn't expect (or want) this of them or doesn't reward their participation.

- *Children with repeated and deliberate tardiness or absences* . . . might have a fear of failure and/or a fear of people which causes them to do anything to avoid being in a situation where embarrassment, pain or failure is imminent. Cutting class or skipping school is one way for these youth to avoid the pain of being in unbearable situations. Like most people, children find it hard to be someplace on time when they really don't want to be there.

- *Children who tend to be withdrawn and isolated* . . . often behave this way when they are not treated with respect. They have a fear of people and might find interaction with others, in what they perceive as a hostile school environment, threatening and painful. Disparities in class, race or culture between student and teacher might help perpetuate this sense of alienation.

- *Children whose facial expressions and body movements tend to show pain, frustration and anxiety* . . . are probably *really* hurting! Black children tend to be very good nonvocal communicators and will often openly display their feelings. An educator who sees visible signs of discomfort should move immediately to bolster confidence, establish rapport and allay fears.

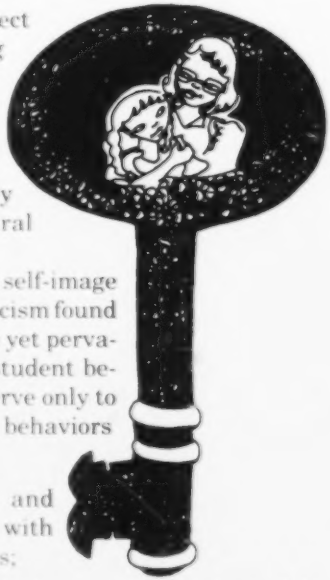
The school environment and teacher behaviors can contribute to either the development or the alleviation of these characteristics. These characteristics can indicate a fear of or intimidation by other people. Children experiencing this fear or intimidation either do things to give people a reason to dislike them or they go overboard in seeking

approval. Often these children have been emotionally bruised and are sensitive even to unintended slights. They have been hurt before and seek to prevent additional pain.

Chapter 2

School-Related Factors and Teacher Behavior That Contribute to Low Self-Image in Students

Institutional Racism and Schools



All people display behaviors that reflect the cultures in which they live, including developing viewpoints, language and attitudes for perceiving and grouping other individuals. It is important, therefore, that educators are aware of the dominant culture's norms and values and that they develop an appreciation for the cultural uniqueness of minority students.

A major factor contributing to the low self-image of many Black youth is the institutional racism found in schools and society. This can be subtle yet pervasive; and it can encourage teacher and student behaviors and organizational norms that serve only to reinforce low student self-image. These behaviors and norms include the following:

- curricula, instructional strategies and teaching styles that are incompatible with a Black student's cultural preferences;
- absence of materials which include Black content and role models;
- stereotyping and the resulting low or negative teacher expectations;
- academic tracking and the resulting failure to foster higher order thinking skills; and
- test bias.

The possible consequences of low self-image influenced by the factors above can be a fear of failure and rejection of success.

In its "Fact Sheet On Institutional Racism," the Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc., notes that institutional racism exists in economic, government and housing institutions; in the health industry; in the media; and in educational institutions. It is often difficult to recognize because it can be "covert, indirect and sometimes unconscious." Its origins are in established and respected institutional norms and societal values. Thus, all of us, White and Black alike, frequently act in ways that are socially acceptable and yet reflect long-standing discriminatory assumptions and practices. When these kinds of practices are embedded in school systems, schools can act to perpetuate the class differences and racial discrimination that are prevalent in society at large (Knowles and Prewitt, 1969).

Institutional racism creates situations in which Black students are enrolled in less challenging educational programs—programs that are less likely to lead to the development of higher order cognitive skills and abilities. Moreover, it creates an atmosphere in which Black students receive the message that they cannot succeed (Hammond, 1985).

Studies in *The Journal of Negro Education* found that both Black and White teachers perceived that schools and schooling valued neatness, conformity, particular concepts of beauty or appearance, attitudes, language and behavior. Both White and Black teachers viewed Black males as most negatively "different" from the valued characteristics and White females as the most positive (Washington, 1982).

Analysis of the impact of institutional racism revealed a subtle, often subconscious cycle of self-doubt and, in some instances, an avoidance of intellectual competition among Black youth (Howard, 1987). Howard concluded that Black youth respond negatively even to rumors of inferiority. These rumors, myths and innuendoes have a strong subliminal effect on the aspirations and academic achievement of Black youth.

The challenge for educators is to seek ways to eradicate institutional racism and its harmful effects. In the Dallas case of Hawkins v. Independent School District (1978), Judge Hughes called for extensive training of teachers and counselors along with "institutional and structural changes" in the Dallas public schools. Specifically, the judge concluded that institutional racism can certainly be reduced through efforts to increase teacher expectations and by providing tests and textbooks that accurately represent all ethnic and minority groups.

Schools promote institutional racism through policies which allow 60 percent of Black youth to be tracked into programs that deny them a strong appreciation for history and literature and access to higher order thinking skills (Cheyney et al, 1987). A 1987 study by the National Endowment for the Humanities found that deficiencies in knowledge of history and literature were most pronounced among students from low-income families and among those pursuing curricula designed for students not destined for college. The authors found schools fostered

"class bias and elitism" by failing to offer adequate instruction in history and literature to these youth who were most at-risk (Cheyney et al., 1987).

The tragic consequence is that Black youth denied history—their history in particular—are "unlikely to realize their full potential" (Cheyney, 1987). Cicero wrote that "to know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain forever a child" (Cheyney et al., 1987).

Teaching and Learning Styles and Cultural Diversity

Both teaching and learning styles reflect the richness of cultural diversity and individual differences. Each instructional style reflects a model of learning and a particular institutional content (Marks, 1978). Educational curriculum and instructional strategies often embody particular learning styles and cultural biases. Children whose culture and learning style are reflected in the content and organization of the classroom are more likely to be highly motivated and to benefit from instruction. The way a teacher imparts knowledge can serve as a catalyst for encouraging and eliciting student achievement. Conversely, teaching styles can actually deter student achievement.

Many Black youth have barely mastered the norms of their own culture when they are confronted with teaching styles that are incompatible with their accepted learning patterns (Hale-Benson, 1982). In her book *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Styles*, Janice Hale-Benson suggests that formal education has not worked for many Black youth because it has not employed teaching styles that correspond with students' learning styles.

When this incongruity between teaching and learning styles exists, Black children become less motivated and more likely to question their self-worth. When Black youth find learning difficult, they often blame themselves and/or develop animosity toward the educational environment.

Before teachers can understand and appreciate the learning styles preferred by students, it is important to understand the role culture plays in shaping learning styles. It shapes cognitive development, children's approach to academic tasks and their behavior in traditional academic settings (Hale-Benson, 1982).

Cultural conflict can occur when children have not had experiences that provide them with the kind of information that is used and valued in school. To reach all children, educators must expand their repertoire of instructional strategies to encompass the various approaches children use to learn. In writing about Black children's learning styles, Hale-Benson suggests that many Black youth employ people-oriented, relational and field dependent/sensitive approaches to learning rather than

the analytical style favored in most school structures. The obvious must be stressed, however—all Black children do not use the same learning style.

People-oriented learning is a learning style derived from African heritage. Because many Black youth learn in their pre-school years through extensive social interaction, some Black youth may have more difficulty than White students in settings where learning takes place primarily through the use of educational hardware, technology, books, listening stations, learning centers, television, programmed instruction, learning kits and other objects (Hale-Benson, 1982).

Because of the differences in culture, some Black youth can benefit from intensive personal interaction with teachers who provide rapport, nonverbal support and affection. Many Black and lower-income children have a need to relate the learning process to their own experience. As a result, these youth may appear over-involved in the learning process. Often, this over-involvement is perceived by teachers as disruptive (Gilbert and Gay, 1985). When Black youth are taught through a teaching style that emphasizes the objective and impersonal over the interactional and personal, their learning, achievement and academic self-images can suffer. In these cases, their cultural and style differences—*not their intelligence*—can lead to lower ability grouping.

Research indicates that a high percentage of minority children are field dependent. The field dependent or sensitive learner tends to be aware of the social and personal relevance of the learning experience. It matters to these youngsters that the materials and concepts are related to their own experience. Field independent learners, on the other hand, are more interested in concepts for their own sake. These students function very successfully in self-structured learning. They enjoy learning isolated information and they like to work in independent, teacher-centered, impersonal environments. In contrast, field dependent/sensitive learners prefer student-centered, more personal environments where learning is related to the life experiences of the student and is neither abstract nor isolated (Witkin, Goodenough, Moore and Cox, 1977). The field dependent learner prefers small group activities and thrives when allowed opportunities to exchange information with peers.

Children who are field dependent or sensitive prefer to work together for the benefit of the group in an atmosphere where the pace of learning is set by the momentum of the group rather than by imposed time constraints. These youth find it difficult to function in field-independent environments where achievement results from individual and often competitive efforts.

Some major differences between field dependent and field independent learners are presented on the next page in Table II (Howard, 1987).

Table II

Learning Preferences

Field Independent Students:	Field Dependent Students:
Independent projects, working alone	Group projects, sharing, discussions
Hypothesis-testing approaches	Personal examples, anecdotes, stories
Solving problems	Relating learning to own experiences
A focus on details, moving from specific to general (phonics, structured rules in spelling and mathematics)	A focus on the big picture, an overview moving from the general to the specific (whole-word, language experience, reasons for rules)
Clear grading criteria with specific feedback	Praise, assurance, working to please others, frequent interaction with teachers
Teacher-centered environment	Student-centered environment

(Adapted from Howard, Bessie C. *Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn*. Mid-Atlantic Center for Race Equity, The American University: Washington, D.C., 1987.)

Educators who want to reach relational, field sensitive youth will succeed by utilizing activities that facilitate social interaction and promote the use of higher order thinking skills. Research suggests that involving the class in lively group discussions, group projects and the telling of stories and personal experiences is more effective than passive, non-social drill and practice activities. Learning should begin with the larger picture that is directly related to the life experiences of the learner. Giving students a sense of a particular activity and how that activity relates to something in their life experience—present and future—can be a strong motivating factor for relational and field sensitive learners. Educators will find that personal compliments, praise, enthusiasm and even hugs will work wonders in promoting both the self-image *and* the achievement of these youth.

Table III (on the following page) provides some tips for offering students supportive feedback.

Table III

Helpful Tips on Giving Supportive Feedback

1. Children respond better when eye contact is direct, sincere, loving and encouraging.
2. Children are more likely to modify behavior when comments are directed at specific behavior, rather than general actions. For example, children are likely to feel worse when they are told they have "misbehaved" than when they are told what specific action caused a teacher to think they were disobedient. When possible, the child should be talked to privately.
3. Children also respond better when a teacher's comments are descriptive rather than evaluative. By describing their own reactions as opposed to the student's behavior, teachers are more likely to be seen as supportive rather than judgmental.
4. Children must feel a teacher is taking into account their needs; therefore, a teacher's comments should reflect genuine concern.
5. Comments are most effective when timed close to the behavior. Children are unlikely to remember feedback that is given long after the action or assignment is completed.
6. By checking with individual students, sometimes privately, teachers can make sure they understand their comments and feelings.

Teacher Expectations

"Blessed are those who expect nothing . . . for they shall not be disappointed." (Anonymous)

Too frequently, parents and teachers protect themselves by adhering to this quotation. In an analysis of research over a 20-year period, Denbo (1986) found that study after study demonstrated that both low and high teacher expectations greatly affect student performances.

Teacher expectations are particularly important in the development of positive self-images in Black students. Positive racial attitudes by teachers are associated with greater minority achievement (Forehand, Regosta and Rock, 1976). Low teacher expectations have been shown to reduce the motivation of students to learn. Perhaps the most damaging consequence of low teacher expectations is the erosion of academic self-image in students.

Black youth are more influenced by teacher perceptions than by their *own* perceptions (Garrett-Holiday, 1985). Black youth can be victimized by low teacher expectations, which are too often based on a teacher's preconceived notions about the potential and ability of students of a particular race, rather than on the actual performance of individual students (Williams and Muehle, 1978). These low expectations are capable of destroying egos and contributing to the loss of positive cultural and racial identity in students.

The relationship between low teacher expectations and low student self-image can be seen by analyzing the behavior of teachers toward students perceived as low achievers. Rubovits and Maehr found that Black youngsters, regardless of actual intelligence or gifted labels, are given less attention and ignored more than their White counterparts in classroom settings (1973). Jacqueline Jordan Irvine of Emory University (1985) found that:

- Black students receive more negative behavioral feedback and more mixed messages than do White students; and
- females receive significantly less total communication, less praise, less negative behavior feedback, less neutral procedure feedback and less nonacademic feedback.

Low expectations reinforce the belief that "no matter what I do, it won't make a difference." Teachers who more frequently use negative feedback for low-achieving students are contributing to the belief on the part of these students that effort does not influence educational outcomes (Cooper et al., 1979). Good's summary (1981) of teachers' behavior toward those students perceived as low achievers includes:

- providing students with general, often insincere praise;
- providing them with less feedback;
- demanding less effort of them;
- interrupting them more often;
- seating them farther away from the teacher;
- paying less attention to them;
- calling on them less often;
- waiting less time for them to respond to questions;
- criticizing them more often; and
- smiling at them less.

Research indicates that reversing these negative behaviors improves student achievement.

As teachers increase their expectations of Black youth, their behavior toward these youth changes. When high expectations are evident, teachers provide more support and children feel more positive about their ability and self-worth (Murnane, 1975). Specific behaviors for

teachers to use to convey high expectations and develop more positive self-concepts in their students will be explored in chapter 3.

Academic Tracking

Tracking by academic level has been prohibited in some jurisdictions because it has been viewed as a means of denying Black youth equal educational opportunities and protection (Hobson v. Hansen, 1971). The failure rate of many Black youth can be attributed in part to "between and within" classroom ability grouping, an approach that fosters the development of a caste system that allows for downward but not upward mobility (Rist, 1970). Tracking increases the likelihood of failure for those who have been placed in the lower tracks or groups where the least is expected, taught and encouraged. When children are tracked, they are deprived of the opportunity to develop the skills they will need to enter the labor force. When placed in tracks from which they rarely advance, many Black youth respond by being truant or by withdrawing mentally and emotionally from school (Lawler, 1978).

The June 1989 report by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, *Turning Points*, found that 25 percent of 10- to 17-year-olds in the United States are extremely vulnerable to school failure. The report recommended changes in the middle school grades which included smaller, more family-like school environments and an end to tracking students by ability. The report states:

> In theory, this between-class 'tracking' reduces the heterogeneity of the class and enables teachers to adjust instruction to students' knowledge and skills. Greater achievement is then possible for both 'low-' and 'high-ability' students.
>
> In practice, this kind of tracking has proven to be one of the most divisive and damaging school practices in existence. Time and again, young people placed in lower academic tracks or classes, often during the middle grades, are locked into dull, repetitive instructional programs leading at best to minimum competencies.

Black and Hispanic students are tracked in disproportionate numbers. The public school population for Blacks and Hispanics in 1980 was 24.1 percent with only 13.8 percent in gifted and talented programs (Elementary and Secondary Civil Rights Survey, 1980). On the other hand, studies indicate that Blacks and Hispanics are greatly overrepresented in lower ability classes and groups as well as in vocational and general tracks (Harrischefeger and Wiley, 1980).

Students placed in low ability classroom groups or tracks, where they know they are perceived as low achievers, are not challenged to do

their best. Since higher order thinking skills are developed in higher ability groups and basic skills in lower ability groups, this system of sorting and labeling students is slowly contributing to a class-based society that could eventually become as rigid as any in the world (Benham-Tye, 1984).

For high-achieving Black and Hispanic students, academic tracking also has detrimental effects. These students often find themselves with few minority classmates and a sense of isolation from their community. They are frequently treated as "exceptions," furthering the sense of low expectations as the anticipated "norm" for their racial/ethnic peers.

Many experts have documented the negative social and academic outcomes created by tracking (Bracey, 1987). It has been viewed as a major contributor to "mediocre schooling." According to Oakes (1986), tracking produces the following consequences:

- initial differences among students are exaggerated rather than accommodated;
- school officials accept the achievement of a few at the expense of the majority;
- most students have mediocre classroom experiences due to curricular and instructional inequalities; and
- barriers develop to prevent success for the poor, Blacks and Hispanics.

Heterogeneous grouping does not mean that teachers should teach to the slowest student in the group (Benham-Tye, 1984). If done correctly, heterogeneous grouping has the advantage of being more truly democratic. It brings together and provides a common learning experience to students with different backgrounds, interests, cultures and plans for the future. Benham-Tye (1984) notes that the content, teaching methods, classroom climate and teacher-student interaction of heterogeneous classrooms resemble average and upper track classes. Cooperative learning strategies which utilize small, heterogeneous groups for instruction and learning have been found to result in high achievement for students at all previous "tracking" levels (Slavin, 1986; Kagan, 1989). Chapter 3 offers strategies for using heterogeneous grouping.

Higher Order Thinking Skills

All students benefit from learning higher order thinking skills. The use of higher order questions to foster achievement is very important. Higher order questioning requires students to reflect, make inferences, seek similarities and evaluate information. When provided few or no opportunities to develop and use critical thinking skills, students experience an imposed academic ceiling.

With frequent opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills, children are more likely to succeed when confronted with higher order questions in standardized tests. Without these opportunities, students are less likely to develop problem-solving abilities and competence in planning and anticipating consequences. Evidence shows underachieving students are self-directed, more motivated and more challenged when taught higher order thinking skills through structured curriculum (Jones, 1986). When unchallenged, these same students use less of their thinking capacity and become (or remain) underdeveloped learners. Children who are not provided higher order thinking exercises in the classroom are more likely to fail and much less likely to realize their full potential (Lawler, 1978).

Thinking has been defined as "the active process involving a number of demonstrable mental operations such as induction, deduction, reasoning, sequencing, classification and the ability to define relationships" (Sigel, 1984). Although influenced by an individual's social and cultural background, thinking skills can and must be taught.

It has been predicted that tomorrow's citizens will need higher order thinking skills even more (Brandt, 1984). Only about 20 percent of the questions currently asked by teachers facilitate the development of higher level cognitive skills; 60 percent require students to recall facts; and 20 percent are procedural (Gall, 1984).

A teacher can develop students' thinking skills in several ways. Teachers create the stimuli, the environment and the impetus that foster learning and they nurture the ability to think when they provide students with strategies to help them answer questions. Moss and Falkof (1984) note that if the objective is to have students learn how to make inferences, teachers can show them how to do so from sensory cues, visual cues and in-the-text cues. In helping minority students think, teachers should also encourage them to discuss their points of view.

According to Irving Sigel, educators should begin the process of teaching students to think by recognizing three components as critical to the teaching of thinking:

- concepts of the child;
- concepts of the context; and
- concepts of teaching strategies.

A good teaching strategy is one that builds on and refines the natural tendency of children to bring order and sense to their world. Educators should not forget that children's thinking skills, in large part, develop through their own efforts to analyze and synthesize information. The foundation for children's development is their own experience. Teachers can use their students' experience as a resource for continued cognitive and academic growth. For example, students should be encouraged to describe their own experience and contrast it with the experience of

other students and/or information presented in curriculum materials. This type of activity can help students recognize the relevance of education and inspires a more active approach to learning.

The social character of children's learning is another natural feature of development that should be mirrored in school. Children's thinking skills develop as a result of both direct instruction and observation. Both types of experiences involve social encounters with other children or adults which guide the child's emerging understanding of the world. In direct instruction, an adult or other child makes an explicit effort to define, model or illustrate knowledge or skills. More frequently, however, children's concepts and thinking skills develop through associations and inferences gleaned from observing people interacting with other people and things.

In addition, according to Sigel (1984), distancing events (see Table IV on the next page) promote abstract or representational thinking skills. He defines these types of events as activities which require individuals to perceive the distance between self and the environment and between various objects in the environment. These activities, which encourage students to analyze, compare and contrast, foster the concepts and categories for abstract thinking.

Thinking involves applying cognitive skills (e.g., analysis) to knowledge or experience (e.g., historical facts) to meet some sort of objective (e.g., discuss similarities between the women's suffrage and the abolitionist movements). Our success as thinkers is related to our ability to plan and monitor cognitive activity in relation to specific goals and to make appropriate adjustments along the way. Metacognition is the formal term used to refer to awareness and control of thinking processes. Those who persevere in problem-solving; who can think critically, flexibly and insightfully; and who can consciously apply their intellectual skills are those who are very good at managing their intellectual resources (Brown, 1978).

Sigel believes teachers could do more to advance abstract reasoning by using questioning strategies and instructional activities that require students to classify objects and events, describe similarities and difference, predict future outcomes, discern causal relations and outline plans to meet a set of objectives.

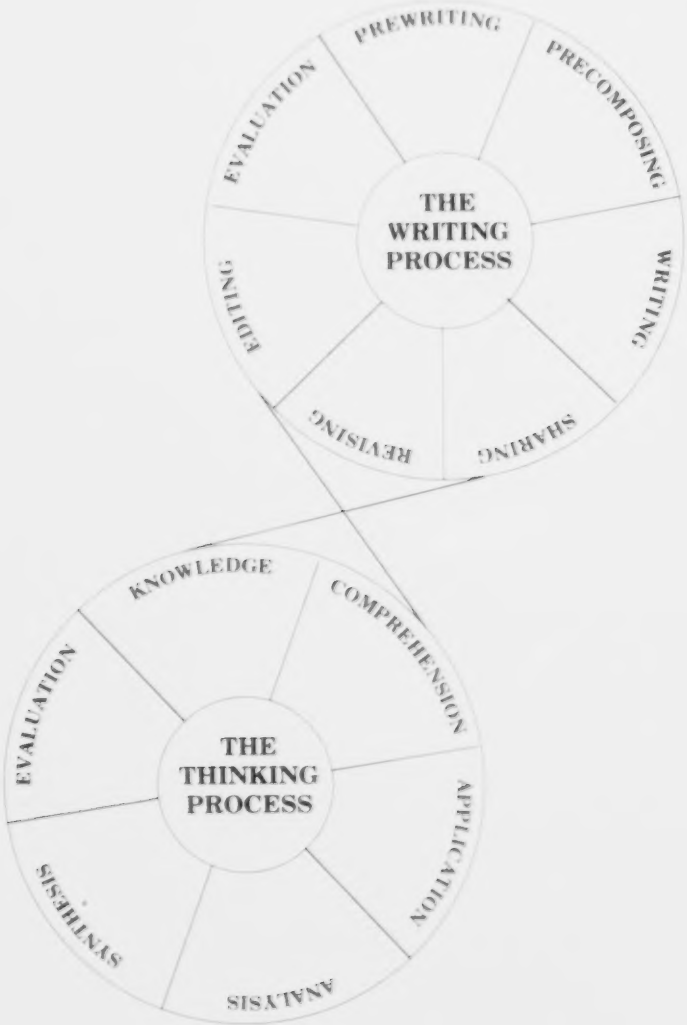
Table IV

Types of Distancing Strategies

High-Level Distancing	Medium-Level Distancing	Low-Level Distancing
evaluate consequences	sequence	label
evaluate competence	reproduce	produce information
evaluate effect	describe similarities and differences	describe
evaluate effort and/or performance	infer similarities	define
evaluate necessary and/or sufficient	sense differences	describe interpret
inferencing, for example, causal relations and their effects	classify symmetrically	demonstrate
generalize	classify asymmetrically	observe
plan	enumerate	
confirm a plan	synthesize classifications	
conclude		
propose alternatives to resolve conflicts		

(From Sigel, Irving. "A Constructivist Perspective for Teaching Thinking," *Educational Leadership*. November 1984, pp. 18-23.)

Figure 1



(From Olson, Carol B. "Fostering Critical Thinking Skills Through Writing," *Educational Leadership*. November 1984, pp. 28-40.)

Test Bias

Educators are generally aware of the long-standing argument that "intelligence" (IQ) tests are culturally biased. Courts in California, Indiana and other states have grappled with the problem and concluded that minorities should not be treated according to the results of biased IQ tests and other instruments.

Tests such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test include items that assess moral opinions and other values that reflect social class bias (Parker, 1981). In addition, most standard tests reflect other forms of biases, which are presented in Table V (Taylor, 1987). No test can be culture-free because no test can incorporate materials and skills that are common to all cultures (Lawler, 1978). The structural format of the test itself, e.g. multiple choice and timed segments, is also a deterrent for many students from diverse cultures. Lower scores of Black youth and females on such tests are more often an indication of cultural conflict than of low intelligence.

Table V

Sources of Communication and Communication-Related Biases in Tests and Assessment Procedures

Situational Bias	Mismatches between examiner and examinee regarding the societal rules of language: e.g., sarcastic answers to obvious questions (Examiner: What time does the clock say? Examinee: Everybody knows clocks don't talk).
Directions Bias	Test directions involve linguistic complexities unfamiliar to the examinee: e.g., "None of the following is true except . . ." is incorrectly interpreted as "All of the following is true except . . ."
Value Bias	Examinee is required to exhibit a particular moral or ethical preference: e.g., One who is dishonest is a) an offender b) a politician c) an ambassador d) an officer
Linguistic Bias	Test presumes that examinee is competent in standard English: e.g., Which sentence is ungrammatical? a) They saw Rose. b) You done it wrong. c) My brother has never eaten. d) Don't use too much.
Format Bias	Test procedures or requirements are inconsistent with examinee's cognitive and/or learning style: e.g., "Select the *best* answer to the following . . ."
Cultural Misinterpretations	Examiner erroneously interprets cultural practices of examinee: e.g., a child who exhibits silence as a natural reaction to an unfamiliar adult examiner is diagnosed as nonverbal or a child who does not respond quickly to test items is labeled unknowledgeable.

(From Taylor, Orlando: *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education*. Mid-Atlantic Center for Race Equity, The American University, Washington, D.C., 1987.)

Culturally biased tests can reinforce low teacher expectations, student expectations and parent expectations because they do not reflect a student's true ability. The underrepresentation of Blacks in programs for gifted and talented students and the overrepresentation of Blacks in special education classes are very serious consequences of the inappropriate use of testing materials.

Many lower achieving Black youth who believe in their social skills and who have developed positive social self-images are easily alienated from the learning process if they are unable to master the dominant culture well enough to achieve on these culturally biased tests. These youth often know they are capable of learning. When culturally biased tests induce failure, these youth become frustrated with the educational environment and are more prone to withdraw. By doing so, they reinforce their negative attitudes toward school, which eventually leads to more rebellious behavior and physical or psychological withdrawal.

Teachers can circumvent the ill effects of test bias on minority students. Criterion-referenced tests, based on what has actually been taught, allow students to show mastery of specific material. Most importantly, however, teachers should not allow poor standardized test scores to influence their expectations. As concerned and sensitive educators, teachers must strive to evaluate minority youngsters in ways which reflect their true abilities. Oral exams may even be substituted when a child has difficulty in taking written tests. Class projects, group assignments and other simulated activities can be adequate barometers of understanding and skill mastery.

Fear of Failure and Rejection of Success

Fear of failure and rejection of success often result from the factors discussed in this chapter. Many Black youth often reject success as a "White" behavioral norm or as a norm pleasing to the teacher, their perceived "enemy."

Students with a low self-image who fear failure are likely to stop trying. Research shows that a student with a positive self-image can actually benefit from failure by using it to modify and motivate subsequent behavior (Melmed and Smith, 1982). Those students who have been led to believe in themselves are able to overcome failure because they have been taught to strive for success and to set high standards. These students have high achievement motivation—a learned behavior (Howard, 1987).

Children who reject success are similar to children who fear failure in that they too are likely to put forth very little effort (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). The rejection of success by some Black students demonstrates an unwillingness or inability to set realistic goals; a favorable response to negative peer pressure; and a diminished lack of motivation.

Success is the progressive realization of a worthwhile goal. Children who fear success generally have not established either short- or long-range goals. Many Black youth fail to set goals because they feel they have minimal control over their fate and will be unable to make a difference in the outcome of a problem, project, experiment or grade (Beane, 1985). This belief, common to lower-income students, has been labeled an external "locus of control." Many lower-income youth see no relationship between hard work and success. Additionally, minority youths may have been taught by their parents that rewards can be discriminately and inconsistently dispensed (Howard, 1987).

Some Black youth may fail to set goals because they have little knowledge of what acceptable goals are. The earlier a child learns the importance of goal setting, the earlier that child will learn the discipline and value of delayed gratification necessary to realize challenging goals.

Some Black youth who may appear to reject the "work ethic" do not set goals because they do not believe these goals are achievable. Educators can instill confidence in students by allowing them to set short-range goals for which they *do* receive support, recognition and immediate encouragement.

Peer pressure can have a tremendous effect on Black students. In a study of low-income Black students at a Washington, D.C., school, peer pressure (and the fear of being accused of abandoning one's social identity) was cited as one major reason that many Black students refused to study, shunned standard English and avoided what they perceived to be "White" interests (the symphony, opera and the humanities) (Fordham and Ogbu, 1978).

Some students were ambivalent toward academic success because they defined it as a White prerogative and didn't want to typify White behavior. Spending long hours in study was considered by these youth as emulating Whites. Other students indicated pressure from peers not to excel for fear of being "labeled" homosexual. Educational institutions have contributed to the belief held by many Black students that academic success is "for Whites only." Many of these students are made to feel they must "act White" to be successful.

When students' cultures or learning styles are not recognized and/or when Black students are overrepresented in special education classes or lower ability groups, they may begin to feel that academic achievement is a White prerogative and that they must choose between their culture and that of the school.

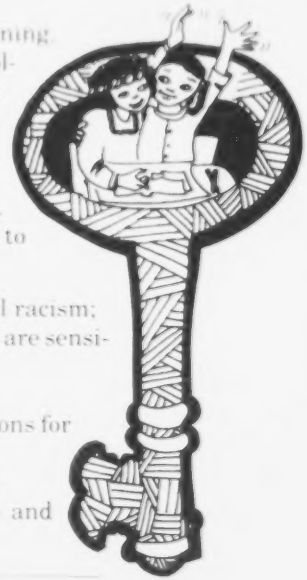
Teachers can help students overcome fear of failure and rejection of success. By showing appreciation for the strengths, culture and learning styles all children bring to the classroom, a teacher can build student confidence. When self-confidence is developed and allowed to thrive, students can more easily be taught dominant cultural styles of success. Teachers must be flexible enough to allow minority youth to experience

school success using the cultural strengths, tools, language and styles they already possess. These youth must be able to feel that success can look and sound Black as well as White. They must feel that success in school will not require a rejection of their home and family culture.

Students must continually be encouraged to see all failure as a learning experience. The feeling of confidence which comes from encouragement will make it easier for failing students to constructively use failure and to persist. In helping students overcome fear of success, teachers should encourage and reward goal setting. In addition, frequent rewards for success and persistence must be a part of the classroom experience. More strategies to help students overcome fear of failure and rejection of success are included in chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Strategies to Improve Student Self-Image and Achievement



A strong self-image is critical to learning. Yet, as chapter 2 demonstrates, many school-related factors and teacher behaviors can debilitate the self-images of Black youth. This chapter examines strategies that can assist teachers to minimize the impact of institutional racism on student achievement. The strategies presented will focus on how to do the following:

- help mitigate the effects of institutional racism;
- make greater use of teaching styles that are sensitive to Black culture;
- use flexible and cooperative grouping;
- demonstrate higher academic expectations for Black students;
- teach higher order thinking skills; and
- help students overcome fear of failure and success.

Mitigating the Effects of Institutional Racism

The activities suggested below will help educators at all grade levels to develop a positive academic self-concept among Black students.

Administrative Policies and Practices

1. Review school policy and revise or eliminate rules which punish students for cultural habits (e.g., wearing African or corn-row hairstyles, signifying or playing the dozens or being loud or expressive).

2. Review instructional materials that belittle, exclude or stereotype minorities. Add materials which are multicultural in all subject areas at all grade levels. If certain biased materials are kept, make sure that teachers know how to use these materials in non-biased ways.

3. Help provide teachers with a basic familiarity of Black history and culture through staff development sessions or informal activities such as reading; visiting art shows, museums or religious institutions; inviting Black achievers as guests to provide role models and content; or participating in Black social events.

4. Use flexible, heterogeneous and cooperative groupings rather than ability grouping and tracking.

5. Ensure that schools in predominantly Black neighborhoods are financed at least at the same level as schools in predominantly White neighborhoods.

6. Incorporate the provision of equal opportunity in the classroom as part of the teacher evaluation process.

Classroom Practices:
Strategies to Strengthen Cognitive Development

1. Use more group activities and thought-provoking, higher order questions to stimulate thinking and to challenge the creativity of Black students.

2. Reward Black students for trying and insure that their persistence, determination and hard work pay off.

3. Make the curricula more relevant to the Black experience by focusing classroom activities on such topics as:

   - current issues, news and events that address economic survival, political decision making and civil rights;
   - values clarification in the shouldering of adult responsibilities; and
   - positive local community and youth developments.

4. Conduct a unit on the damage done to all members of society by racist organizations such as the Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan.

5. Conduct a unit on South Africa to show how prejudice and racism has divided the nation and affected its economy.

Building on Students' Culture by Using a Variety of Teaching Strategies

Culture determines how children perceive life and their relationship to the world. Because culture also influences how and what children learn, educators can use culture to improve self-image and achievement. Not only must teachers show an appreciation of cultural diversity, they

must also incorporate teaching strategies that are congruent with the learning styles of their students. According to Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience (see Table VI below), students remember more when they participate in an actual experience or even a simulation.

Table VI

Dale's Cone of Experience*

See Wiman & Mierhenry, *Educational Media*, Charles Merrill, 1960, for reference to Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience.
*Question marks refer to the unknown.

Activities to Support Black Student Identity

1. Teach Black students standard English, but acknowledge and accept all Black English as a legitimate form of expression. Black youth need to learn to speak and write standard English; however, they should not be made to feel uncomfortable when using Black English in casual conversation.

2. Teachers can show their acceptance of their students' speech through:

   - using poems, stories and plays that contain dialect;
   - occasionally building rhythmic speech patterns and activities into lesson plans; and
   - acknowledging and accepting slang or cultural dialect in minority youth while stressing the appropriate and inappropriate use of such language.

3. Provide many opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning:

   - Provide opportunities for children to display their non-academic strengths and talents in ways that enhance academic learning. Students should use dramatic or musical skills in role playing or debating, for example.
   - Students can relate family and personal-experiences through class discussions or writing to include those who have facilitated their growth, evoked special feelings or taught them a sense of responsibility.
   - Emphasize those things that make each student and/or their heritage special and acknowledge the non-academic strengths which students display. Provide opportunities for students to interact cooperatively with students from other races and ethnic groups.
   - Young people can also engage in dramatic readings or role plays where they have opportunities to dramatize cultural values and behaviors of other races.
   - Provide intergenerational experiences.

4. To build on many Black youngsters learning style preferences, educators can develop a more personal approach to interacting with students. "Stage setting" is a set of activities deemed important by some Black students before engaging in an assignment (e.g., pencil sharpening, rearranging postures, checking paper and writing space, asking for repeat directions, checking perceptions with neighbors). These students are likely to be perceived as avoiding work or

disrupting class. However, many observers view "stage setting" as a very likely activity for many Black youth (Gilbert and Gay, 1987). Teachers need to maintain a high level of openness and acceptance with these children and youth. One way to convey this attitude is to accept the need for a few minutes of "stage setting" activities.

5. Black youth learn best when allowed extensive interaction with the teacher and other peers. Hugging, touching and approving "pats" are certainly permissible and encouraged, especially for younger children when appropriate. Caution should be taken to assure that such contact is genuine and supportive, not intrusive, however. Although equipment and objects are part of the school's resources, teachers should supplement use of objects (i.e., gadgets, toys, computers, learning devices, equipment) with extensive person-to-person interaction, close physical proximity and lots of reassurance.

   Teachers can also:

   - speak in a comforting and consoling voice;
   - demonstrate fairness in their treatment of students;
   - incorporate humor in their instructional styles and in one-on-one interactions; and
   - encourage test givers to develop some measure of rapport with students before administering an exam.

6. Another way to expand on Black students' learning style preferences is to provide students with opportunities to work cooperatively by learning from each other. A highly cooperative atmosphere will provide a more comfortable learning environment for students. Some examples follow:

   - Make use of peer tutoring or peer coaching by allowing students to receive peer assistance in areas where they are weak and to offer peer assistance in areas where they are strong. The phrase "each one teach one" should be a part of the class motto, especially in the early grades. Older students, even those without outstanding academic skills, can tutor younger students as a means to enhance self-image.
   - All children should have a "buddy" who spends time with them, gets their homework when they're absent, discusses impressions and learning and shares skills, information and strategies. Buddies should also have an opportunity to share with the class special and unique things they have discovered about their respective buddy.

- Students should be involved in group projects where they learn from one another and develop interactional skills.
- Reward sharing and other cooperative behaviors. Let the students compete against themselves for a higher level of performance rather than against other students. Later, reward them for their attempts as well as their successes.

If students are appreciated for their non-academic strengths, they are more likely to gain the confidence needed to overcome their areas of academic deficiencies. Teachers can motivate students through activities which affirm students' cultural backgrounds and cultural strengths.

Using Flexible and Cooperative Heterogeneous Grouping

As noted in chapter 2, heterogeneous grouping is an excellent alternative to ability grouping and tracking that often have irreversible and detrimental effects on the self-image of minority youth.

The use of heterogeneous groupings requires a restructuring of both curriculum and classroom procedures. Teachers will find that heterogeneous groupings will be most successful when the following activities take place (Benham-Tye, 1984):

- diagnostic pre-testing;
- in-class grouping and re-grouping for instruction;
- variety in learning materials and activities;
- questioning and testing at higher cognitive levels; and
- frequent use of high quality feedback (specific, direct and immediate).

One approach to heterogeneous grouping in the classroom is Cooperative Learning, in which students are organized into small mixed-ability groups to learn academic material. Student team learning and Jigsaw, developed by Robert Slavin and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, emphasize cooperative activity and reward structures along with individual accountability. Learning Together, developed by David and Roger Johnson at the University of Minnesota, nurtures cooperation through five elements: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skills and group processing. The work of Spencer Kagan and Dee Dishon is also extremely useful to develop cooperative learning strategies. All these approaches are effective alternatives to permanent grouping and tracking. These instructional strategies have the added benefit of improving understanding and interaction among students from diverse groups and backgrounds while increasing student achievement. (See Bibliography for Cooperative Learning references.)

Demonstrating Higher Academic Expectations for Black Youth

In teaching Black students, teachers should use a great deal of praise, infrequent criticism and constant reinforcement. Other behaviors that will convince Black students that teachers believe in them and want them to excel include:

- using the classroom walls to display the work of all students in areas where they are skilled;
- writing encouraging notes on students' papers and to parents or guardians of elementary school students;
- maintaining a warm, inviting classroom climate through the use of bright and bold colors at all grade levels;
- encouraging students' natural exuberance. (If necessary, teachers can tone it down without making students feel they are wrong to show so much feeling); and
- recognizing Black student knowledge and achievement in all areas, not only in Black history or stereotypical areas.

Scheduling one-on-one sessions with elementary students to discuss their weekly, monthly and long-range goals is helpful. Teachers can also monitor progress and provide insight for ongoing improvement. If a heavy high school class load precludes meeting with each student, meet with a significant portion of students who require more attention.

Teachers must accept encouragement and motivation as critical to improving students' self-image. Black youth can and should be challenged to be their best, but that challenge must take place in a non-threatening, supportive manner. Students must feel that the motivation is sincere and well intended. Personal compliments, along with displays of empathy, sensitivity, compassion and attention, will work wonders for youth regardless of age or grade.

Teaching Higher Order Thinking Skills

Learning is more meaningful and permanent when students have opportunities to make the learning process their own through both active mental involvement and reflection (Benham-Tye, 1984). The teaching of higher order thinking skills can provide students with such active involvement. Open-ended questions to youth of any age or skill level can stimulate their imaginations. When answering questions requiring simple recall, Black youth soon feel they are perceived as low achievers.

Beginning in the elementary grades, teachers can develop higher order thinking and stimulate the desire to analyze and reflect by fostering the following:

- *critical thinking* (the ability to judge and evaluate with careful and deliberate thought) through exercises which involve open-ended questions. Example: "What do you think would have occurred in this experiment if . . .?"
- *divergent thinking* (the ability to assess differences, dissimilarities) through assignments in which students must consider differences and deviant results. Example: "Suggest possible uses for paper that decomposes one year after having been exposed to air" (Marks, 1978).
- *inductive thinking* (the ability to reason from specific observations to general conclusions). Example: "Explain how the following are related: placement of a jar under hot water to open it, sagging telephone wires and movable joints on a bridge" (Marks, 1978).
- *deductive thinking* (the ability to infer and reason from a general to a more specific principle). Example: "If air contracts as it cools and liquids expand as they freeze, explain what happens to each of the following at 32 degrees F: a bottle of soda, a bicycle tire, an inflated balloon" (Marks, 1978).

Teachers can teach children to think at every grade level and through virtually every classroom activity. For example, prior to any learning activity, teachers can point out strategies and steps for attacking problems, rules that students should remember and directions they should follow. Time constraints, purposes and ground rules can also be identified and internalized by students.

During any activity, ask students to indicate where they are in their strategy, to describe their trail of thinking and to define alternative problem-solving pathways they intend to pursue. This will help them become aware of their own behavior and their thought processes.

After the learning activity, ask students to evaluate how well they followed the rules and directions, how productive the strategies were and whether alternative, more efficient strategies could be used in the future (Costa, 1984).

In all activities, be sure to generate questions. Regardless of the subject area, encourage students to pose study questions for themselves prior to and during their reading of textual material. This self-generation of questions facilitates comprehension and encourages students to pause frequently to think about whether, for instance, they know main characters or events; grasp the concept; can relate it to what they already know; can give other examples; or can use the main idea to explain other ideas or predict what might come next. All of this helps

students become more self-aware and to take conscious control of their studying development (Sanacore, 1984).

Tables VII and VIII, on the following pages, were developed by Jay McTighe (Maryland State Department of Education, 1985). They provide suggested forms of questioning to develop quality thinking and specific strategies to extend student thinking. The question starters in Table VII, Questioning for Quality Thinking, are organized under the categories of Bloom's Taxonomy (Table IX, on pages 44-45). The Taxonomy, while not an accurate representation or model of human thinking, is a useful vehicle for reminding teachers to utilize different types of questions during instruction. Tables VII and VIII are most useful when used to "cue" teachers to integrate effective questioning and discussion strategies more regularly into their daily repertoire (McTighe, 1985).

Table VII

Questioning for Quality Thinking

Knowledge–*Identification and recall of information*
- Who, what, when, where, how _____?
- Describe _____.

Comprehension–*Organization and selection of facts and ideas*
- Retell _____ in your own words.
- What is the main idea of _____?

Application–*Use of facts, rules, principles*
- How is _____ an example of _____?
- How is _____ related to _____?
- Why is _____ significant?

Analysis–*Separation of a whole into component parts*
- What are the parts or features of _____?
- Classify _____ according to _____.
- Outline/diagram/web _____.
- How does _____ compare/contrast with _____?
- What evidence can you present for _____?

Synthesis–*Combination of ideas to form a new whole*
- What would you predict/infer from _____?
- What ideas can you add to _____?
- How would you create/design a new _____?
- What might happen if you combined _____ with _____?
- What solutions would you suggest for _____?

Evaluation–*Development of opinions, judgements, or decisions*
- Do you agree _____?
- What do you think about _____?
- What is the most important _____?
- Prioritize _____ according to _____.
- How would you decide about _____?
- What criteria would you use to assess _____?

(From Jay McTighe, Language and Learning Improvement Branch, Division of Instruction, Maryland State Department of Education.)

Table VIII

Strategies to Extend Student Thinking

- **Remember "wait time I and II"**
  Provide at least three seconds of thinking time after a question and after a response.
- **Utilize "think-pair-share"**
  Allow individual thinking time, discussion with a partner, and then open up for the class discussion.
- **Ask "follow-ups"**
  Why? Do you agree? Can you elaborate? Tell me more. Can you give an example?
- **Withhold judgment**
  Respond to student answers in a non-evaluative fashion.
- **Ask for summary to promote active listening**
  "Could you please summarize John's point?"
- **Survey the class**
  "How many people agree with the author's point of view?" ("thumbs up, thumbs down")
- **Allow for student calling**
  "Richard, will you please call on someone else to respond?"
- **Play devil's advocate**
  Require students to defend their reasoning against different points of view.
- **Ask students to "unpack their thinking"**
  "Describe how you arrived at your answer." ("think aloud")
- **Call on students randomly**
  Avoid the pattern of only calling on those students with raised hands.
- **Encourage student questioning**
  Let the students develop their own questions.
- **Cue student responses**
  "There is not a single correct answer for this question. I want you to consider alternatives."

(From Jay McTighe, Language and Learning Improvement Branch, Division of Instruction, Maryland State Department of Education.)

As students perform an activity, help them to choose consciously. Promote metacognition by helping them explore the consequences of their choices and decisions prior to and during the act of deciding. They will then be able to perceive causal relationships among their choices, their actions and the results they achieve. Providing nonjudgmental feedback about the effects of their behaviors and decisions on others and on their environment helps students become more aware of their behaviors (Costa, 1984).

Educators can teach students to evaluate using multiple criteria. Have students reflect upon and categorize their actions according to two or more sets of evaluative criteria. For example, they can distinguish between what was helpful and what was hindering; or what they liked and didn't like (Costa, 1984). Other strategies to strengthen this metacognition include:

1. *Paraphrasing students' ideas.* Some examples follow: "What you're telling me is . . ."; "What I hear in your plan are the following steps . . ."; or "Let's work with Peter's strategy for a moment." Inviting students to restate, translate and compare each other's ideas causes them to become not only better listeners of others' thinking but better listeners of their own thinking (Costa, 1984).

2. *Labeling students' behaviors.* When teachers place positive labels on students' cognitive processes, students become conscious of their actions: "What I see you doing is making out a plan of action for . . ."; "What you are doing is called an experiment"; "You're being very helpful to Mark by sharing your paints. That's an example of cooperation" (Costa, 1984).

3. *Clarifying students' terminology.* Students often use nonspecific terminology. For example, in making value judgments, students might say, "It's not fair"; "He's too strict"; or "It's no good." Teachers need to clarify these values: "What's too strict?"; "What would be more fair?"; "What's no good?" (Costa, 1984).

4. *Pointing out nominalizations.* Students sometimes make statements such as "They're mean to me" ("Who are they?"); "We had to do that" ("Who is 'we'?"); "Everybody has one" ("Who is 'everybody'?") Asking such clarifying questions causes students to define their terminology and to examine the premise of their thinking (Costa, 1984).

5. *Modeling.* Of all the instructional techniques suggested, teacher modeling probably has the greatest influence on students. Since students learn best by imitating the adults around them, the teacher who publicly demonstrates metacognition will probably produce students who metacogitate. Some indicators of teachers' public metacognitive behavior might include sharing planning; describing

goals and objectives and giving reasons for their actions; making human errors and then illustrating recovery from those errors by getting back on track; admitting not knowing an answer but designing ways to produce an answer; seeking feedback and evaluation of their actions from others; having a clearly stated value system and making decisions consistent with that system; being able to self disclose, using adjectives that describe their strengths and weaknesses; demonstrating understanding and empathy by listening to and accurately describing the ideas and feelings of others (Costa, 1984).

Using Blooms's Taxonomy of Thinking Levels, provided in Table IX (on the following page), teachers can promote thinking ability through the use of cue words to induce thinking at the respective levels shown in the table. All of Bloom's categories should be utilized in flexible sequences rather than in a fixed order.

There is one final suggestion: outlaw "I can't." Create a classroom environment where students are forbidden to say "I can't"; "I don't know how to . . ."; or "I'm too slow to . . ." Instead, teach students to identify what information is required, what materials are needed or what skills they need. When students can identify the gaps between what they know and what they need to know, they are more likely to develop both thinking skills and a persistent attitude toward successfully completing a task.

Table IX

Taxonomy of Thinking Levels

Level	Cue Words	
Knowledge *Recall* *Remembering previously learned material*	Observe Repeat Label/Name Cluster List Record Match	Memorize Recall Recount Sort Outline/Format Stated Define
Comprehension *Translate* *Grasping the meaning of material*	Recognize Locate Identify Restate Paraphrase Tell Describe	Report Express Explain Review Cite Document/Support Summarize Precise/Abstract
Application *Generalize* *Using learned material in new and concrete situation*	Select Use Manipulate Sequence Organize Imitate Frame	Dramatize Illustrate Test Out/Solve Imagine Information Known Show/Demonstrate How to Apply
Analysis *Break Down / Discover* *Breaking down material into its component parts so that it may be more easily understood*	Examine Classify Distinguish/ Differentiate Outline/No Format Given Map Relate To Refute Conclude/ Draw Conclusions	Characterize Compare/Contrast (Similarities/ Differences) Question Research Interpret Debate/Defend Infer Analyze

55 *Continued on next page*

Table IX

Taxonomy of Thinking Levels–*Continued*

Level	Cue Words	
Synthesis *Compose* *Putting material together to form a new whole*	Propose Plan Compose Formulate Design	Construct Emulate Imagine/Speculate Create Invent
Evaluation *Judge* *Judging the value of material for a given purpose*	Compare (Pros/Cons) Judge Decide Rate Evaluate Criticize Argue	Justify Convince Persuade Assess Value Predict

Helping Students Overcome Fear of Failure and Rejection of Success

Many students fear both academic failure and success, while others reject academic success as a "White" aspiration. Students who fear failure have often experienced failure before. These students are tortured by an educational process that focuses more on identifying their weaknesses than on identifying their strengths. Activities to help students identify and develop their unique strengths and talents follow.

Although some students might not excel academically, they will have non-academic strengths that can be extolled, nurtured and strengthened in the classroom (Marks, 1981). Look for the following and make efforts to link these non-academic strengths to a possible future career interest. Students must realize they have opportunities for "legitimate" success through their non-academic strengths. Many students are motivated to overcome their areas of academic deficiencies once they realize there is appreciation for some of their non-academic "gifts".

Non-academic strengths or qualities	Possible academic or career outlet
■ moral responsibility	social service, teaching
■ compassion	psychology, medicine, nursing
■ diplomacy	politics
■ humor and wit	law, writing
■ sensitivity	counseling, teacher aide
■ independence	business, science
■ courage	civic activism, advocacy organization
■ altruism	social work, nursing, community organizing, environmental work
■ manual dexterity	computers, carpentry, graphic arts, locksmith
■ talent for innovation and improvisation	law, media, engineering, architecture, politics
■ mechanical achievement	mechanics, plumbing, electrical work, drafting
■ expressive achievement	performing arts, writing, interior design
■ culinary achievement	chef, caterer, dietitian
■ physical prowess	fire fighter, emergency medical technician
■ social achievement	hotel management, sales

Teachers can also help students overcome fear of failure and rejection of success by building better home/school relationships. Despite evidence that shows a positive home-school relationship helps students perform better (Henderson, 1975), many schools do very little to strengthen this delicate bond. As difficult or time-consuming as it may be, teachers must reach out to parents or guardians and get them involved in motivating their children.

Teachers can improve not only their relationships with parents or guardians, but also the perception parents or guardians have of the

school. Research shows that parent involvement increases student achievement (Henderson, 1987). Some initiatives teachers can take to enhance parental involvement follow.

Promoting Positive Teacher-Parent Relationships

1. Teachers with primary-middle school children can take 15 to 20 minutes during the evening and call 3 to 5 parents or guardians to discuss the students' progress. High school teachers can call the parents or guardians of those students who are having a difficult time and those showing improvement or special achievements.

2. Many teachers at the junior and senior high school levels think it serves no useful purpose to forge positive home-school relations. However, even at this level, a solid, positive relation with the home can still improve the desire for a child to succeed.

3. During the first telephone contact, teachers can discuss some of the good things they've already noticed about the student, such as:

   - special gifts and talents they have noticed (seek to learn what parents or guardians love most about the student);
   - things they plan to do to enhance the student's abilities; and
   - their short- and long-range goals for the class and the student.

   Teachers should leave the parent (or guardian) with the impression that they are excited about teaching, that they believe in that parent's child and that they are willing and anxious to meet with the parents or guardians. This initiative often has immediate results as parents (or guardians) encourage their children to do well with you.

4. During the first parent-teacher conference, teachers should take time to discuss with parents or guardians the unique strengths and interests of each student and any sensitivities or special qualities or responsibilities they might have:

   - "What have you noticed about Antar that you consider outstanding?"
   - "What kinds of things does Peter like to do most?"
   - "What are the special activities Ellen engages in at home?"
   - "Are there any talents Elijah has which I should help him to develop?"
   - "Are there things I should avoid saying or doing with Kashif?"

5. For elementary students, during the remainder of the school year, send little notes home to celebrate accomplishments. Teachers can call the parents or guardians and share their delight with them—especially in those instances where a child shows signs of reversing a declining trend.

6. Learn more about community resources, community leaders and after-school activities for your students;

7. Give children homework assignments that can involve other family members (e.g., reporting on the content of television programs or interviewing family members);

8. Show the utmost respect and concern for each parent or guardian and always refer to the school community in a positive light; and

9. Be visible at all parent-teacher functions.

Students who fear success are often not challenged to believe in success principles. Remember, these students often have both a positive social self-image and a negative academic self-image. However, teachers can help these students to develop success motivation by:

- helping them to set short- and long-range goals and to develop strategies for achieving them; and
- fostering positive peer group support.

A structured approach to success is one way to help students learn to value achievement. Table X (on the following page) is a "Success Chart" which students can complete in the teacher's presence to identify each helpful characteristic. Examples of short- and long-range goals should be given and a sample success chart developed with the group. Students can identify a goal they want to achieve. Next, they should list their outstanding qualities and those things that help or impede their progress and specific strategies for achieving their goal. Teachers should note the students' strengths and let students know their intent is to help students to reach their goal by building on their strengths and talents and helping them to overcome those things that might be impeding their progress.

Table X

The Success Chart

Student Name _____

Goal (*Something You would Like to Have, Become, or Accomplish by the Age of 25.*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

HELP:
List Qualities or Characteristics You Possess That Will Help You to Reach Your Goal

HINDER:
List Things That "Could Possibly Hurt or Limit Your Efforts to Reach Your Goal

Strategies For Achieving This Goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NOTE: This same procedure can be used for short-range goals (e.g., Something You'd Like to do Within the Next Three Weeks). For short-range goals, list *specific* steps to be taken and include a time frame.

Activities to Improve Goal-Setting Abilities

1. Schedule a monthly "show-and-tell" in which students share with the class non-school-related goals they have set and accomplished.
2. Have weekly reviews of famous Black Americans who have achieved their goals. Remind students that success is very much a part of the African-American culture and experience.
3. Applaud all efforts students put forth to reach their goals.
4. Set monthly academic achievement goals with and for each child and share them with parents or guardians.
5. Assist students to develop sequential strategies for meeting goals.
6. Help students to see failure as a learning experience by discussing failure as part of the road to success.

Finally, students can be inspired by the role model they see in their teachers. Far too many teachers are discouraged because they believe their students lack adequate role models in their homes and communities. Rather than concerning themselves with influences outside of the school over which they have no control, teachers can make the most of the time they have with students. Remember, most students spend more time interacting with their "school family" (approximately six hours every day) than they spend interacting with their "home family." A teacher's exemplary behavior and aspirations can influence students' success drive and their goal orientation.

Strategies for Success

Peer pressure can be turned into peer acceptance and support to promote school success. Teachers can offset negative peer pressure and encourage peer acceptance and support through the use of friendship networks (which can serve as learning stimulants), group activities and projects, heterogeneous groupings, peer coaching and mentoring and the "buddy system."

When success is rewarded, it is reinforced. Rewards can motivate students. For example, Eastern High School in Washington, D.C., sponsors four Student of the Month awards. The winners, top students who have been recommended by teachers, get $15, a certificate, their pictures on a plaque in the school lobby, breakfast with a Kiwanis Club member and lunch on Capitol Hill with the principal and a school board representative. This program is designed to boost the image of students who are doing well and make success a cultural norm for the school.

Educators must work very hard to dispel the belief that it doesn't pay to do well academically. Children can be motivated to succeed through

inspirational examples. As often as possible, teachers should allow students to:

- discuss local success stories, such as:
  - experiences of city or county council representatives who might have lived in the students' neighborhood or attended their school;
  - accomplishments of elementary or high school alumni;
  - triumphs of local business persons or community leaders or family members who overcame setbacks;
  - the experiences of local entertainers or sports heroes;
  - the road to success taken by educators—including yourself.
- examine the lives of contemporary national heroes (past and present)—especially those whose early lives were similar to students'.

Keep students inspired and let them know victory can and will be theirs. They have to believe in their own abilities and teachers can make the critical difference.

Conclusion and Impact

Although not an easy profession, education is certainly a wonderful one, affording the opportunity for daily rewards. The challenge for educators is to seek and obtain the gratification the profession is capable of providing. In seeking to make teaching the exceptionally exciting experience it should be, this publication has provided some insight and information to enhance both the self-image and the achievement of Black youth. Yet, the real challenge for all educators—individually and collectively—is to make a recommitment to provide all youth the joy of learning. The information presented here can only benefit students if educators accept the challenge and responsibility of bringing out the very best in every child whose life becomes theirs to touch.

Teachers should take tremendous pride in knowing how important they are in building America's future. When teachers become more aware of the insidious manifestations of institutional racism—in understanding that the school, teachers and the students themselves are victims—they can be very effective in forging an alliance with students and parents to correct the effects of institutional racism. Consequently, teachers will be able to help Black students build positive academic self-images and increase their academic achievement.

Not only must teachers believe they can make a difference, but they must *choose* to make a difference. Educators can make a commitment to

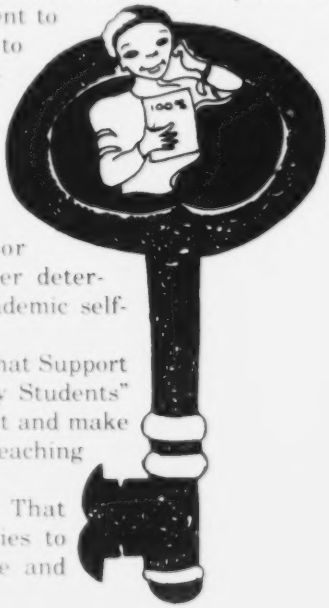
help minority students realize the joy of learning—by helping them to be the best they can.

The challenge confronts each of us in different ways. Yet, we owe it to ourselves, our children, our communities and society to provide all youth with the best we can offer. Surely, a powerful learning foundation will facilitate the progress and prosperity of which to be proud—for the future of all of us.

Chapter 4

Worksheets to Identify and Improve Low Self-Image

All of the activities suggested in this booklet can become a part of a teacher's classroom and daily commitment to educating minority youth. It is important to identify poor self-image and use appropriate strategies to rid classrooms and schools of the behaviors and factors that lower the self-image of minority youth and preclude them from reaching their full academic potential.



"Worksheet A: Indicators of Poor Student Self-Image" can help a teacher determine whether a student has a low academic self-image, a low social self-image or both.

"Worksheet B: Teacher Behaviors That Support a Positive Self-Concept Among Minority Students" can serve as a self-evaluation instrument and make it easier for teachers to improve their teaching styles, expectations and methods.

"Worksheet C: Student Activities That Enhance Self-Concept" includes activities to help students improve their self-image and their academic achievement.

Worksheet A

Indicators of Poor Student Self-Image

Here are a number of characteristics of a poor self-concept in children and youth which are grouped into academic and social behaviors. Use this list in assessing an individual child to see how you can best help strengthen academic or social self-concepts or both.

Check the appropriate column on the right.
F = Frequently **S** = Sometimes **R** = Rarely

Poor Academic Self-Image

To what extent does the student . . .	F	S	R
1. fail to complete work?			
2. show hostile behavior?			
3. use defiant speech?			
4. daydream?			
5. show little or no eye contact?			
6. make excuses?			
7. give up too easily?			
8. skip school or is tardy?			
9. fail to volunteer or participate?			
10. is withdrawn and isolated?			
11. express dislike for school, the teacher or both?			
12. exhibit facial expressions and body movements which tend to show frustration, anxiety or pain?			

Poor Social Self-Image

To what extent does the student . . .	F	S	R
1. lack confidence in performing before others?			
2. fail to demonstrate ability in social skills such as sports, dancing, "playing the dozens" or rapping?			

Continued on next page

Worksheet A–*Continued*

		F	S	R
3.	function in a support group of peers?			
4.	exhibit interest in social activities such as dancing, listening to music or sports activities?			
5.	show little or no eye contact?			
6.	persist in learning social skills (bike riding, card playing, music or sports)?			
7.	demonstrate friendly, sincere behavior?			
8.	dress slovenly and show poor personal hygiene?			
9.	utilize poor nutritional habits?			
10.	try too hard to please?			
11.	cry easily?			
12.	use facial expressions and body language which show pain, anxiety or frustration?			

Worksheet B

Teacher Behaviors That Support a Positive Self-Concept Among Minority Students

Here is a self-checklist that you can use in determining your strengths in promoting positive self-concepts in Black youth and areas in which you may want to expand your knowledge and skills. There are two categories:

- Check "+" if you are comfortable with your knowledge and skills in this area and exhibit appropriate and consistent behavior.
- Check "–" if you need to strengthen your knowledge and skills and demonstrate appropriate behaviors consistently.

Creating a Multicultural Environment

	+	–
As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:		
1. reviewing reading materials and school tests to identify culturally sensitive materials and taking steps to minimize their impact on students?		
2. identifying and bringing to the attention of school officials policies or procedures that inadvertently penalize certain races, cultures, sexes or disabilities?		
3. understanding and teaching African-American history and culture?		
4. developing classroom activities that foster an understanding and appreciation of the struggle of Black Americans against slavery?		
5. providing opportunities for students of different racial and ethnic groups to interact?		
6. identifying and discussing in class contemporary examples of overt racism (e.g., South Africa)?		
7. integrating appreciation for cultural diversity into all of your classroom activities?		
8. recognizing and pointing out to students values that strengthen cultural bonds?		

Continued on next page

	+	–
9. constructing and using heterogeneous groups?	☐	☐
10. distinguishing between equality and equity and knowing when to treat students the same or different on the basis of their race, ethnic group, disability, culture, sex or level of academic achievement?	☐	☐

Using a Variety of Teaching Styles

As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:

	+	–
1. encouraging personal interaction, including hugs, touching and affectionate pats?	☐	☐
2. identifying students' strengths and weaknesses in *how* they learn?	☐	☐
3. using instructional strategies that allow students to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses?	☐	☐
4. explaining how class content is related to the students' experiences?	☐	☐
5. encouraging more student grouping and interaction that lead to greater student achievement and appreciation of diversity?	☐	☐
6. developing rapport with each of your students?	☐	☐
7. conducting classroom activities that allow for the emotional and physical involvement of Black youth?	☐	☐
8. using positive slogans and inspirational messages all over the classroom?	☐	☐
9. making use of the buddy system?	☐	☐
10. using eye contact in a supportive way?	☐	☐
11. organizing curriculum around central ideas and themes?	☐	☐
12. organizing math instruction around major mathematical processes of abstracting, inventing, proving and applying?	☐	☐

Continued on next page

	+	–
13. using alternative instructional strategies, e.g. cooperative learning and peer coaching?		

Demonstrating Positive Expectations

As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:

	+	–
1. avoiding seating arrangements which keep lower achieving students farthest from you?		
2. providing more "wait-time" for lower achieving students to respond?		
3. balancing classroom interaction so that all students receive their fair share of time and attention?		
4. providing better verbal and nonverbal support when communicating (e.g., head nodding, smiling, frequent use of praise)?		
5. providing academic challenges for Black students?		
6. writing students encouraging notes letting them know of your high expectations for and good feelings about them?		
7. maintaining a bright, colorful and cheerful classroom?		
8. displaying each students' work at some time during the year?		
9. showing empathy, sensitivity and compassion in all dealings with students?		
10. using more personal compliments when talking to Black youth?		
11. using active listening when talking to Black students?		
12. setting weekly and monthly goals with students and monitoring their progress through one-on-one interaction?		

Continued on next page

Worksheet B–*Continued*

Using Cooperative and Flexible Grouping

As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:

	+	–
1. using heterogeneous grouping rather than ability grouping and tracking?		
2. using more diagnostic pre-testing to enhance the heterogeneous grouping process?		
3. providing more opportunities for teacher-student interaction?		
4. employing some forms of cooperative learning groups?		
5. setting up and using a peer tutoring or coaching system?		
6. using a greater variety of learning materials and activities?		
7. providing more frequent use of high quality feedback?		
8. re-grouping students at regular intervals?		

Teaching Higher Order Thinking Skills

As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:

	+	–
1. using open-ended and essay questions that foster active involvement and reflection?		
2. providing opportunities for critical thinking through open ended questions?		
3. providing opportunities for divergent thinking by asking students to compare and contrast?		
4. providing opportunities for inductive thinking by specifically asking students to reason from the specific to the general?		
5. providing opportunities for deductive thinking by specifically asking students to reason from the general to the specific?		

Continued on next page

	+	–
6. using one-on-one cajoling, probing, delving and inspiring to get children to develop their thinking powers?		
7. allowing students to differentiate, integrate and reintegrate so as to develop representational competence?		
8. providing opportunities for higher level distancing and metacognitive activities?		
9. providing opportunities for more role plays, simulation planning and evaluations?		
10. providing regular opportunities for problem-solving?		

Overcoming Fear of Failure and Fear of Success

As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:	+	–
1. identifying students' unique talents and non-academic strengths and building on those in an endeavor to foster confidence and overcome academic weaknesses?		
2. using peers positively to identify strengths and encourage success through group activities?		
3. using the buddy system?		
4. developing a positive and cooperative relationship with the parent or guardian?		
5. celebrating individual student accomplishments throughout the school year?		
6. helping students set short- and long-range goals?		
7. allowing for weekly reviews of famous Black Americans who have set goals and achieved them?		
8. setting monthly academic achievement goals for each child which can be shared with parents or guardians?		
9. using "The Success Chart" or similar approach?		

Continued on next page

Worksheet B–*Continued*

	+	–
10. using activities to improve success motivation?		
11. attributing poor performance to factors that the student has control over rather than basic ability?		

Improving the Total Commitment

	+	–
As a teacher, how do you rate yourself on:		
1. projecting an image which tells the students that you are here to build rather than destroy them as persons?		
2. letting students know that you are aware of and interested in them as individuals?		
3. conveying your expectations and confidence that each student can meet well defined standards of values and demands for competence and follow guidance toward solutions to problems?		
4. enhancing the academic expectations and evaluations which parents or guardians hold of their children's ability?		
5. serving as a model of sensitivity and high ideals for each student?		
6. taking every opportunity to establish effective private (one-on-one) or semi-private communication with students?		
7. encouraging students to express their opinions and ideas?		
8. conveying to students concern and interest for their needs?		
9. making certain the classroom climate is inviting physically and emotionally?		
10. exhibiting enthusiasm for learning tasks and for the students?		
11. interjecting humor into the classroom?		

Continued on next page

Worksheet B–*Continued*

	+	–
12. making a concerted effort to interact with each student?		
13. encouraging students to praise their peers?		
14. setting realistic but challenging expectations for students?		
15. showing a desire to learn more about the various cultures represented in your classroom?		
16. providing opportunities for all students to "shine"?		
17. working with each student to establish goals, develop strengths and overcome weaknesses?		

Worksheet C

Student Activities That Enhance Self-Concept

Here are some activities for students that enhance self-concept. If you regularly provide this activity in your classroom, check the blank on the left. If you don't provide opportunities for this activity, check the blank on the right. You may want to expand your repertoire if you have more checks on the right than you have on the left.

Provide		Don't Provide
☐	1. Activities where students can entertain classmates and/or display non-academic talents and strengths as well as academic gifts.	
☐	2. Activities where students can engage in such social skills as dancing, sports events, rapping, singing or dramatic readings.	
☐	3. Peer tutoring and group projects where students can develop mutual supportive systems with peers.	
☐	4. Practical skills which allow students to repeat in rhyme.	
☐	5. Non-structured, challenging games; puzzles; activities with no deadline for completion.	
☐	6. Activities designed to help students be successful by working on challenging yet achievable goals.	
☐	7. Activities involving the use of pantomime.	
☐	8. Multicultural subject content and activities.	
☐	9. Activities to foster concentration and long attention spans.	
☐	10. Learning centers relating to subject matter and student interests.	
☐	11. Activities that explore different types of families and the cultural strengths of each.	
☐	12. Activities which highlight the unique strengths and special talents of each student.	

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